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ABSTRACT

A study to show that effective Extension public relations are based on sound programs communicated to the public and that they involve all Extension staff members is presented. Extension public relations is defined as two-way communication process between Extension and its publics and identifies five steps: (1) analysis, (2) planning, (3) communication, (4) evaluation, (5) revision. Study makes nine recommendations to Cooperative Extension Service to improve Extension's public relations. (Author/NF)

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SPECIAL STUDY

COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION PUBLIC RELATIONS

Submitted by

Edward J. Dieffenbach

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of Master of Education

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

June, 1971

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IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE SPECIAL STUDY PREPARED BY EDWARD J. DIEFFENBACH ENTITLED COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION PUBLIC RELATIONS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION.

Orvil A. Clegg
Major Professor

Permission to publish this report or any part of it must be obtained from the Dean of the Graduate School

ABSTRACT OF SPECIAL STUDY

COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION PUBLIC RELATIONS

The study was designed to show that effective Extension public relations are based on sound programs communicated to the public and that they involve all Extension staff members. The purpose of the study was to define public relations, to identify the steps in the public relations process, and to determine the principles of effective communications as a means to more effective public relations for the Extension Service.

Extension public relations was defined as a two-way communication process between Extension and its publics. Its function is: (1) to evaluate the public attitude, (2) to define objectives, (3) to identify the objectives with the public interest, and (4) to develop, execute, and evaluate a program to earn public understanding and acceptance.

The Extension public relations process identified five steps: (1) analysis, (2) planning, (3) communication, (4) evaluation, and (5) revision.

The Extension communication process model emphasized these points: the EXTENSION SERVICE develops a PROGRAM communicated through the MEDIA to the PUBLICS. The FEEDBACK of

information is included in the model. Four principles of communication were listed and described: (1) know the public, (2) be creative, (3) use established communication methods, and (4) use two-way communication.

Public relations was reported as an applied and behavioral science; there is a trend in the field of public relations to use the resources of this area of study since the business of the public relations practitioner is human behavior.

The study made nine recommendations to the Cooperative Extension Service to improve Extension's public relations: (1) convey to the Extension staff an understanding of Extension public relations, (2) improve Extension programs and program development, (3) improve communication methods and build better working relationships with commercial mass media personnel, (4) improve the Extension Service by establishing an identity, maintaining a competent staff, and updating office facilities and services, (5) provide public relations in-service training, (6) keep government officials informed about Extension, (7) keep the colleges and universities, government agencies, and civic and service groups informed about Extension, (8) keep the relevant publics informed about Extension, and (9) give the non-farm

public an appreciation of agriculture and its contribution to our economy and our civilization.

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AUTOBIOGRAPHY

The writer was born at Pulaski, Iowa, September 28, 1922, the older of two children of Oscar R. and Mary R. Dieffenbach. The years of childhood and youth were spent on the family farm.

Elementary education was received by the writer in the Fairview Grade School, a one-room country school, and secondary education in the Pulaski High School; with graduation in 1941. During those years the writer was an active 4-H Club member, taking part in the local, county, and state 4-H Club projects and activities.

Undergraduate education was received at the Bloomfield Junior College and the Iowa State College (subsequently the Iowa State University), graduating from that institution in 1950 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Dairy Husbandry. During those years the writer was employed, either full-time or part-time, in Pennsylvania and Iowa doing Dairy Improvement Association and Advanced Registry production testing.

The writer accepted employment with the Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension Service, October 1, 1950. During the following five years he held positions of DHIA field specialist, assistant county agent, and associate county agent; and on October 1, 1955, was named county agricultural agent in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, the position he now holds.

The writer was married, in June, 1952, to Jane Thompson, of Darby, Pennsylvania.

During the years as an Extension staff member, the writer has been a member of the Pennsylvania and National Association of County Agricultural agents, has held all of the state offices and some national committee assignments, and has attended 10 annual meetings of the national association. The writer has been an active member of the Montrose Rotary Club since 1955, has held local and district offices, and served as Rotary International District Governor in 1963-64.

The writer attended Extension Summer School at the University of Wisconsin in 1955 and the National Extension Summer School at the Colorado State University in 1969. The writer has been on leave of absence since September 15, 1970, to do graduate work in Continuing Education at the Colorado State University. Upon completing graduate study in June, 1971, he will resume his responsibilities as county agricultural agent in Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to those who have provided guidance and assistance in making it possible to complete this study and the graduate program at the Colorado State University.

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Further appreciation is extended to the administration of the Pennsylvania State University and the Pennsylvania Cooperative Extension Service for their support and for granting leave of absence so that the writer could pursue his graduate program at Colorado State University.

Special appreciation is expressed to the Susquehanna County Extension Staff for considerate and sincere support during the writer's absence.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Extension Service is in the "people business." The work of Extension involves people of many walks of life. There are farmers, homemakers, students, parents, businessmen, government representatives, rural and urban people of many professions, researchers, teachers, paraprofessionals, and the Extension staff. The success of the Extension Service is dependent upon what these people think about it, and how they act, based upon what they have learned through various channels of communication.

Cooperative Extension Service, Extension Service, and Extension are terms which are used interchangeably. This study defines the Cooperative Extension Service as a partnership between each state land-grant institution and the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in cooperation with local governments and local people. It was created under provisions of the Smith Lever Act of 1914 and subsequent related legislation. The Extension Service conducts educational programs of an informal, non-resident, problem oriented nature. The basic legislation provided federal funds to be matched on a state basis. Local units of government generally provide funds for Extension work.

Extension is dependent upon appropriations of federal, state, and local tax funds for its maintenance and development. It must answer to the legislative bodies for the way it spends these funds. In addition, the general public is increasingly concerned about how government and educational organizations are using their monies and meeting the purposes for which they were formed. Thus, Extension's business with people is judged by whether or not it is effective in accomplishing its purpose--conducting programs of education for action and stressing organizational and educational leadership.

Extension has a product that is a result of its business with people. The product is the Extension program. The program is developed by the Extension staff and the voluntary local leaders working cooperatively.

Ballard (1964) made this statement about the Extension program:

> The basic factor in Extension public relations is a sound program in which appropriate and diverse publics participate with the leadership of competent, well-trained personnel (p. 216).

Ballard also felt that good public relations should be considered a pathway to understanding--the ultimate goal of Extension public relations. A sound public relations program should be directed to the end that people will be better informed, happier, and more prosperous. Almost every consideration of public relations for Extension leads to one base point--program. The Extension program conveys to the

public a better understanding of the philosophy, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of Extension.

Everything that the Extension Service does has an aspect of public relations. A short and easily remembered definition of public relations agreed upon by many people in the public relations field is, "Good works, well told." Therefore, Extension public relations is the program well told to the people who make up its publics.

Gilbert (1964) said:

> A public can be defined as a group of people distinguished from other people by the factors held in common (p. 24). . . . There are many publics, each composed of two or more individuals with a common interest. All are important and each public should be handled differently (p. 168).

Sanders (1960) listed the following eight Extension publics for the purpose of an inventory of Extension public relations:

1. The Extension organization itself
2. The parent institution
3. Elected and appointed officials
4. Organizations
5. Businesses
6. Mass media personnel
7. Other agencies
8. General public (p. 3).

The Extension Service has a long history of work with the farm public. Many rural non-farm and urban individuals and groups have sought the services of Extension during the last several years. Scheel (1964) stated that it is important to recognize that publics do not remain static and suggested that Extension should be alert to:

1. Changing publics resulting from the effects of our educational work.

2. Potential publics with whom we have not yet established productive mutual interests.

3. Emerging publics created by changes in society (p. 10).

Scheel used a different basis for classifying publics and suggested the key to the idea is that the Extension program depends upon organized effort by people, and that people tend to form organizations around subjects of common concern to them as individuals. One individual may belong to many organizations for different purposes. At least seven kinds of interests form the basis for publics: occupational, geographic, chronologic, socio-economic, educational, avocational, and ethnic.

The definition of a public and the two examples of classifying Extension publics suggests that there are a number of ways to classify a public for public relations programs. Cutlip and Center (1964) reported that the publics are constantly shifting in age groupings, economic interests, political interests, and geographic residence. "In public relations you must communicate with a passing parade, not a standing army (p. 117)."

Dochterman summarized his philosophy concerning educational public relations by saying:

> Any public relations program has to be based on a very sound effective enterprise, a good product to sell. Every

> person in an organization becomes a part of what you call the public relations staff. [1]

Dochterman also indicated that public relations must become the attitude of the total organization. The secretary or the switchboard operator can either build the public relations effort or destroy it. Every staff member has a role in interpreting what the organization is doing for its publics. Service is the reason for existence. "We have a product to sell, service is our product, and every person in the public is our employer."

In communicating public relations, the unimportant factor can easily become the important factor. The operation of the movie projector, press camera, or public address system may seem easy enough and not too important. But, when one of these audio or visual aids fails, public reaction can be critical.

Clegg cited the example of an Extension agent who thought he had completed all of the details for a successful cattle feeders meeting. The public address system had not been fully checked and it failed to work just when it was needed. A banker who attended the

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[1] Clifford L. Dochterman, Director of Public Relations, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado. Personal interview, February 19, 1971.

meeting was critical of the agent for a long period of time because of the faulty public address system.[2]

Communication by writing for newspapers and by speaking to civic and service groups appears to be one of the successful ways to create good public relations. Yet, too often the communicator is disappointed in the results of a public relations effort, and the real reason for the disappointment is because the communicator wasn't effective.

Important as well as unimportant things must be kept in mind in communicating public relations. One should write instead of tell the details of a news story to the news editor. It means writing a better news story and writing a summary of the speech one is going to make. It means paying attention to detail.

Gilbert (1964) pointed out that public relations is continuous and always present, good or bad. He likened good public relations to health, not appreciated until we are sick. By comparison, good public relations is not missed until needed. Some writers have compared public relations to a wagon; if allowed to coast, it can go only one way--downhill.

Good communication is essential if an organization is to do an effective job in public relations. Good communication is a continuous, planned, and well supported effort. It is one of the means of

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[2]Denzil O. Clegg, Associate Professor of Continuing Education, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado. Personal interview, March 1, 1971.

conveying to the public a better understanding of the philosophy, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of Extension.

Problem

What is the importance of communication in the public relations process as it relates to the Cooperative Extension Service and Extension programs? Much misunderstanding results from faulty communications. Public relations is saying the right things, at the right time, in the right way, to the right people. Communication is a factor that will increase the effectiveness of the public relations effort of the Extension Service.

Ballard (1964) reported:

> Extension public relations is essentially a condition or a partnership between the Service and the publics with which it functions. . . . It is a clear fact that public relations is stark reality. This conclusion deserves consideration in light of current temptations to project an image of "what the public ought to think" Extension represents instead of what Extension really is and what it is actually doing (p. 216).

Attention should be given to the statement in the previous paragraph. The Extension public relations effort must be: "What Extension is and what it is actually becoming." The fact is acknowledged that too many people think of public relations, especially the practitioners, as: "What the public ought to think." An image of the latter type is the reason that public relations is sometimes scorned as press-agentry.

Sanders (1960) said:

> There is still prevalent in the minds of some Extension personnel the idea that good public relations is a sort of "glad handing," money-spending, entertaining, publicity acti ity which is apart from their regular procedures and program (p. 5).

Public relations thinking has served to deepen the science of social responsibility in organizations and industry. Public relations has contributed to public welfare and improved the communications required in modern society. The misdeeds of public relations, like any other activity, are more widely heralded than the accomplishments; however, the constructive work far outweighs the harmful. The public needs to understand that public relations does not constitute a handy umbrella to protect an organization against a storm of unfavorable public opinion (Cutlip & Center, 1964).

This study, Communication and Extension Public Relations, represented an effort to improve the understanding of public relations in general and Extension public relations specifically. The study identified public relations as an applied and behavioral science due to the fact that whenever a public relations problem situation is analyzed, it usually involves some sort of attitude and behavior change.

The emphasis on communication in the study is consistent with the identity of public relations as an applied and behavioral science. The Extension public relations model (see Figure 2) and the Extension communication process model (see Figure 7) represented

a conceptual framework into which public relations problems can be more systematically analyzed and solved.

Sanders (1960) said that Extension needs better working relationships with commercial mass media personnel. There is also a need to strengthen internal relations by working together in support of our Extension program. These needs are part of a list of nine needs of Extension public relations stated in a summary of Extension relations completed in 1959.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of communications in the field of public relations for the Cooperative Extension Service.

Objectives

The following objectives were developed to guide the study:

1. To define public relations.

2. To identify the steps in the public relations process.

3. To determine the principles of effective communication as one step of the public relations process to influence human behavior.

4. To draw implications about the public relations process and effective communication which may be helpful in improving Extension public relations.

Procedures

Three sources of information were used in gathering material and ideas for the study.

1. A review of literature in the field of public relations.

2. Interviews with specialists in the field of public relations.

3. Responses to letters sent to selected persons and organizations active in the field of public relations.

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC RELATIONS DEFINED

Public relations, whether recognized or not, is with an organization at all times. It is as certain as "death and taxes." These organizational relationships are with the public or some special part of the public. The Cooperative Extension Service is dependent upon public endorsement. Therefore, it is dependent upon public relations.

Lesly (1967) had this to say about the development of public relations:

> Public relations is a phenomenon and a necessity of our times. It has been created by the forces that increased the tempo of the world, casting people into many diversified groups, all seeking different objectives yet all having to work together toward common advantages and progress. The growing complexity of civilization has created problems undreamed of when social, economic, political, and religious classifications were simple and distinct (p. 2).

Public relations is not new, it is the current emphasis and the developing techniques of the field that gives public relations the delusion of newness. Cutlip and Center (1964) believe that it probably had its beginnings when Neolithic man discovered he could trade a flint for the hindquarter of a sheep. "With recognition of the power of people's opinions, there came in response practices we now call public relations (p. 16)." Archeologists have found a farm bulletin in

Iraq which told the farmers of 1800 B. C. how to sow, irrigate, and harvest their crops. This early effort to communicate information to influence actions is not unlike the work of the Cooperative Extension Service for almost six decades.

Black (1962) credited the first actual use of the phrase "public relations" to President Thomas Jefferson in 1807 in drafting his "Seventh Address to Congress." In the first draft he used the words "state of thought" and later scratched out these words and wrote in "public relations."

Griswold and Griswold (1948) credited Theodore Roosevelt with being the father of modern public relations. It was Roosevelt who drew the issue between the private power of corporations and the public power of government. Some writers credited the late Ivy Lee with being the father of modern public relations. Lee was the man who had the vision to see that the needed service was a two-way operation, to make the corporation behave in its relations to the public and to make news out of the improved behavior. Public relations came into its own during World War II. Since that time the field has been recognized as a management function, it has matured, specialized, and become a profession.

Authors of several of the references included in the study generally agree that public relations, as it is known today, is around 50 to 60 years old and that there are well over 100,000 professional

public relations people in the United States. Schoenfeld (1963) reported that public relations is not confined to the United States. The first World Congress of Public Relations was held in 1958 in connection with the Brussels World Fair. In 1960 there were 39 known professional public relations associations, nine of them in the United States. "Roy Leffingwell has estimated that at least 150,000 persons outside the United States are engaged in some phase of PR as a career (p. 27)."

Public relations means different things to different organizations. There is a wide variation in the size and scope of public relations practices. Darrow, Forrestall, and Cookman (1967) listed seven basic concepts that are common to all public relations:

1. Every company and every interest has public relations whether it does anything about them or not.

2. Public goodwill is the greatest asset and public opinion is the most powerful force of any enterprise.

3. Integrity is the basic element of a successful public relations program.

4. Develop sound policies which are in the public interest, as well as the company interest.

5. Policies and programs which are not in the public interest have no chance of final success.

6. Good public relations have to be deserved. Public relations is not a special sugar to make a sour situation taste sweet.

7. Public relations must use many means of reaching the public. It goes beyond press relations and publicity.

Many definitions of public relations are in the literature. There are almost as many definitions as there are public relations practitioners and public relations organizations. The definitions selected for this study emphasize communication. If one is to earn public understanding and acceptance--that is, to change people's behavior--one has to communicate with them (Robinson, 1966).

Welch and Wilson (1951) reported the following definition:

> Extension public relations consists of doing good work in a way which develops in the public mind an appreciation for and recognition of the program (p. 4).

Cox (1960) stated it this way:

> Public relations is a continuing process forming a two-way channel for the interpretation of the extension program to the community and the understanding of the community by the extension personnel. . . . Good public relations are sincere, honest, comprehensive, and simple. They depend on such media as radio, television, newspapers, annual reports, and personal contacts. Cooperators contribute to the success of public relations. However, they must be well informed as to the program and principles of the organization to render the maximum assistance (p. 20).

Hibbard gave this view:

> Public relations is a deliberate, planned, and continuous activity aimed at establishing and maintaining mutual understanding between a public or private entity,

> particularly those groups of persons with which it is directly linked or involved.[3]

Kelsey and Hearne (1963) said, "The best public relations for extension workers is effective, helpful work fully explained and presented so that people know what is being done (p. 90)." Welch thought of it as, "Public relations is made up of the policies, the activities, and the communications of a business by which that business is known in the community."[4]

A definition by Cutlip and Center (1964) described public relations as, "The planned effort to influence opinion through acceptable performance based upon two-way communication (p. 3)." The authors used the term public relations to bring about the performance and communication necessary to build good relationships with the public. The term public relations is plural, however, it is used in the singular.

The National School Public Relations Association has adopted the following definition:

> Educational public relations is a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between an educational

---

[3]Russell E. Hibbard, County Agricultural Agent, Norwich, Conn., Chairman 1970 Public Relations Committee, National Association of County Agricultural Agents. Personal letter, February 19, 1971.

[4]Wayne A. Welch, President, Wayne Welch, Inc., Public Relations/Consultation on Advertising, Denver, Colo. Personal interview, January 22, 1971.

> organization and its internal and external publics. Its program serves to stimulate a better understanding of the role, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of the organization. Educational public relations is a management function which interprets public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to encourage public involvement and to earn public understanding and acceptance (Educational Public Relations Standards for Professionals, undated, p. 3).

The fact that public relations is an applied social and behavioral science was stressed by Robinson (1969). The reason for this point of view is that the goal in nearly all public relations efforts is to change attitudes and behavior. Robinson defined public relations in this way:

> Public relations as an applied social and behavioral science is that function which:
>
> 1. measures, evaluates, and interprets the attitudes of various relevant publics (the word public is used . . . to refer to any group of people who share a common interest);
>
> 2. assists management in defining objectives for increasing public understanding and acceptance of the organization's products, plans, policies, and personnel;
>
> 3. equates these objectives with the interests, needs, and goals of the various relevant publics; and
>
> 4. develops, executes, and evaluates a program to earn public understanding and acceptance (p. 5).

The following definition of Extension public relations was an attempt to include the necessary elements of public relations as the public relations effort applies to Extension:

Extension public relations is a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between Extension and its publics. The function of the public relations process is:

1. to evaluate the attitudes of the various relevant publics (public is used to refer to any group of people who share a common interest);

2. to define objectives for increasing public understanding and acceptance of Extension programs, policies, and personnel;

3. to identify the objectives with the public interest; and

4. to develop, execute, and evaluate a program to earn public understanding and acceptance.

CHAPTER III

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROCESS

Public relations, good or bad, is the result of everyday activities. There is nothing that can substitute for good day-by-day relations with the public. But just doing a good job will not guarantee that the result will be good public relations. The public must understand what is being done and why it is being done. An understanding of the public relations process will make the public relations effort of Extension much easier and more successful.

Harmonious adjustment between an institution and its publics does not just happen, it requires the exchange of opinions and information, and it is a continuing effort. This adjustment must be planned and provided for. The public relations effort requires listening, counseling, communication, and evaluation in this process (Cutlip & Center, 1964).

Cutlip and Center said that the public relations process has four basic steps:

1. Research-Listening. Studying the opinions, attitudes, and reactions of persons concerned with the acts and policies of an organization.

2. Planning-Decision Making. Bringing the opinions, attitudes, reactions, and ideas to bear on the policies and programs of an organization.

3. Communication. Explaining and dramatizing the chosen course to all those who may be affected and whose support is essential.

4. Evaluation. Evaluating the results of the program and the effectiveness of techniques used.

Each of these steps is important and they are necessary to have an effective program (see Figure 1). The steps in the public relations process of analysis, synthesis, communication, and interpretation are continuous, spiraling, and over-lapping.

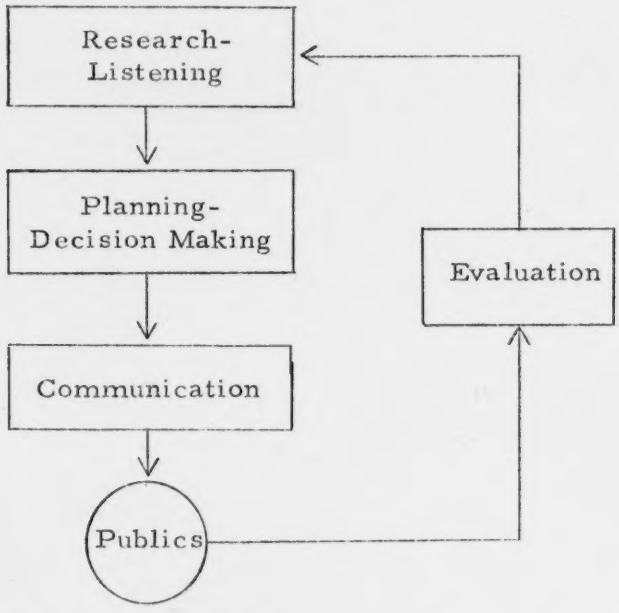

Fig. 1. The public relations process. Adapted from Cutlip and Center.

The public relations process according to Schoenfeld (1963) involved:

1. Conception. The public relations program begins with a tentative plan based on immediate needs, long range goals, the number and types of publics to be dealt with, and their present attitude toward the organization.

2. Collection. The collection, or research, involves the assembly and evaluation of information about public attitudes, and the interpretation of these public feelings.

3. Formulation. The outline of performance to be achieved will be a balance between responsiveness to public needs and aspirations, and responsibility for institutional objectives.

4. Execution. Once a program is formulated and approved, it is carried out with vigor at all echelons.

5. Communication. Communication is the act of planning and producing the written, spoken, and/or pictorial messages that form the pulse of a public relations program; the job of explaining an organization to its patron community.

6. Evaluation. The public relations process is not complete until there is systematic evaluation of all its component parts, collectively and individually.

Wright and Evans (1964) said that there were three basic steps necessary to initiate a public relations program and put it into

operation. Each organization has different objectives and may phrase the steps differently; however, the essential stages are:

1. Research and analysis. This step is to answer the question: What can a public relations program do for an organization? The essential element in effective public relations performance is to research the problem, gather the facts, and analyze all factors affecting the organization's relations with its publics. One must have access to all pertinent information from within the organization and from external sources.

2. Planning the program. Planning involves five phases:

   a. Targets, or publics to be reached.

   b. Objectives, or areas of interest based on organizational policy.

   c. Media to be used.

   d. Implementation by which objectives are to be attained.

   e. Expected results.

3. Implementing the program. The experience of the public relations practitioner will determine the methods of implementing the program. There is a direct relationship between the means of attainment and the results to be expected of the program.

> The objectives are the specific results expected on the basis of the general requirements of the program. They are basically the end result of analysis and planning, and the effectiveness of the public relations program can be measured in terms of what has been accomplished as

> against what was expected. Obviously, the expectations must be realistic (p. 52).

Another outline of the public relations process was described by Robinson (1966). He said the process involved the following steps:

> 1. Analysis of problem situation: leads to ascertaining goals and a clarification of problems to be solved.
>
> 2. Development of a public relations program designed to cope with problems pinpointed in step 1.
>
> 3. Execution of public relations programs developed in step 2.
>
> 4. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the public relations program; research done to obtain necessary feedback.
>
> 5. Revision of public relations program in the light of feedback obtained via research in step 4 (p. 96).

Robinson emphasized that program evaluation, or the feedback of information from the public, is important enough to receive a full step in the public relations process; placing it on a par with developing and executing the public relations program. The entire process was envisioned as circular in nature. Problem identification and program development is a never ending process. "The social environment within which all organizations operate is dynamic, fluid, and changing (p. 97)." Therefore, the public relations effort must be the same way: dynamic, fluid, and changing, whenever change is necessary.

Summary

The public relations process was described in the study with four outlines; one of the outlines was illustrated with a model. The following outline and model (see Figure 2) was an attempt to include the necessary elements of the public relations process in a description and a model that will be useful to the Extension Service in developing the public relations program.

Fig. 2. The Extension public relations process model.

1. Analysis. One must start with a thorough analysis of the problem situation. This step requires research to determine the opinions, attitudes, and reactions of persons concerned with the goals

of the Extension Service and the policies (if any) relative to the problem situation.

2. Planning. The Extension public relations program must be designed to deal with the problems resulting from the analysis of the situation keeping in mind the objectives of the organization, publics to be reached, methods to be used, and results to be expected.

3. Communication. Effectively communicating the Extension public relations program that was developed to gain public understanding and acceptance. Communication is the heart of the public relations process.

Communication is essential, it is the key word in public relations according to Korbe (1964). "Communication is the telephone system of an organization (p. 8)." Communication must be used to formulate and carry out the policies of an organization. It is the only means by which one can promote understanding, goodwill, and unity. The publics of an organization need to be informed of what has happened, of what is happening, and of what will happen.

As Lerbinger and Sullivan (1965) said:

> . . . we believe that communications between institutional groups is essential to their mutual rights and obligations; that public relations has the job of managing these communications effectively; that the adverb effectively is a remarkably awkward one because so little is known with precision about large-group interaction and so much is yet to be defined regarding mutual rights and obligations (p. v).

4. Evaluation. The feedback of information concerning the effectiveness of the Extension public relations program is essential to the organization. One should be familiar with the methods of research to secure the feedback information. The method may be simple, e.g., word of mouth, opinion polls, or easily designed surveys; or detailed, e.g., structured research studies.

5. Revision. The results of the evaluation step must be studied to determine the revision (if it is called for, of course) of the Extension public relations program. This step of revision should continually stimulate the organization to develop further plans and policies.

The Extension public relations process is illustrated in Figure 2 as a wheel in motion. Each step leads to the next step, continuing in a circular motion, until the circle is completed.

The circular motion of the Extension public relations process suggests that identifying problems and developing programs is a never ending process. Today's environment is dynamic and changing, and the public relations effort must prove its worth to the organization. Each step in the public relations process has a part in demonstrating the value of public relations.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Communication is a familiar term to Extension staff members. Public relations is not a well understood term by many Extension staff members. With this limited knowledge of the terms, Extension staff members may ask, "Why place emphasis on communication and public relations?"

Gilbert (1964) pointed out the value of communication and good public relations:

> The list includes prestige, good will, recognition, promotion of goods and services, community acceptance, few misconceptions and prejudices, prevention of misunderstanding and ill will, lack of apathy and ignorance, and support from other businesses and agencies. To this list . . . (and particularly for the Cooperative Extension Service), we must add desired legislation from politicians, beneficial policies and regulations from governing boards, understanding of policies and actions, cooperation of employees and land owners, quality employees at all levels, confidence of the publics in . . . regulations and actions, and allocation of adequate budgets to do the job (p. 15).

"Letting people know" is the backbone of all effective public relations programs according to Marston (1963). Even the best actions have little effect until they are widely known. The skill of communication is much more than writing ability, knowledge and use of the media of communication, and acquaintance with the experts in the

field. The skill of communication includes the ability to approach readers, listeners, or viewers in such a way as to command their attention, interest, and agreement.

Marston emphasized:

> Men communicate today, as they always have, through words, symbols, and the simple relations of friendship; but they communicate more effectively if they have a thorough knowledge of the principles of successful public relations communications as they have been demonstrated time and again. A completely exhaustive list of such principles of effective communication has not yet been made and is not likely soon to be made, for social scientists are continually discovering and refining them (p. 244).

"The public relations practitioner, no matter what else he may be, is first and foremost a communicator (Robinson, 1969, p. 18)." Practically all of the problems of public relations can be translated into a communication context. All attempts to persuade, motivate, inform, or inspire depend on some form of communication.

Communication is defined as the sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality. It is a two-way process according to Dale (1967).

Schramm (1954) described communication as follows:

> Communication comes from the Latin communis, common. When we communicate we are trying to . . . share information, an idea, or an attitude . . . the essence of communication is getting the receiver and se[illegible]er "tuned" together for a particular message. . . . Communication always requires at least three elements--the source, the message, and the destination. A source may be an individual (speaking, writing, drawing, gesturing) or a communication organization (like a newspaper, publishing house, television station or motion picture studio). The

> message may be in the form of ink on paper, sound waves in the air, impulses in an electric current, a wave of the hand, a flag in the air, or any other signal capable of being interpreted meaningfully. The destination may be an individual listening, watching, or reading; or a member of a group, such as a discussion group, a lecture audience, a football crowd, or a mob; or an individual member of the particular group we call the mass audience, such as the readers of a newspaper or a viewer of television (pp. 3-4).

Robinson (1969) suggested a communication theory model (see Figure 3) that is identified by four stages--sender, message, media, and recipient. The four stages are described as follows:

1. Sender. The person or the group responsible for initiating a particular communication.

2. Message. Symbolizes that which the communicator wishes to transmit to the recipient. Central to the message stage is the idea of communication through common experience. For a message to be truly intelligible, the experiences of both the sender and the recipient must overlap to some extent.

3. Media. Embraces all of the methods by which one transmits a message.

4. Recipient. All of the various "objects" of the communication, whether the object of the effort is another individual or group of individuals.

The communication model also identifies the communication process, shown as the product of the four stages. The communication process is used to link all of the stages to form the whole.

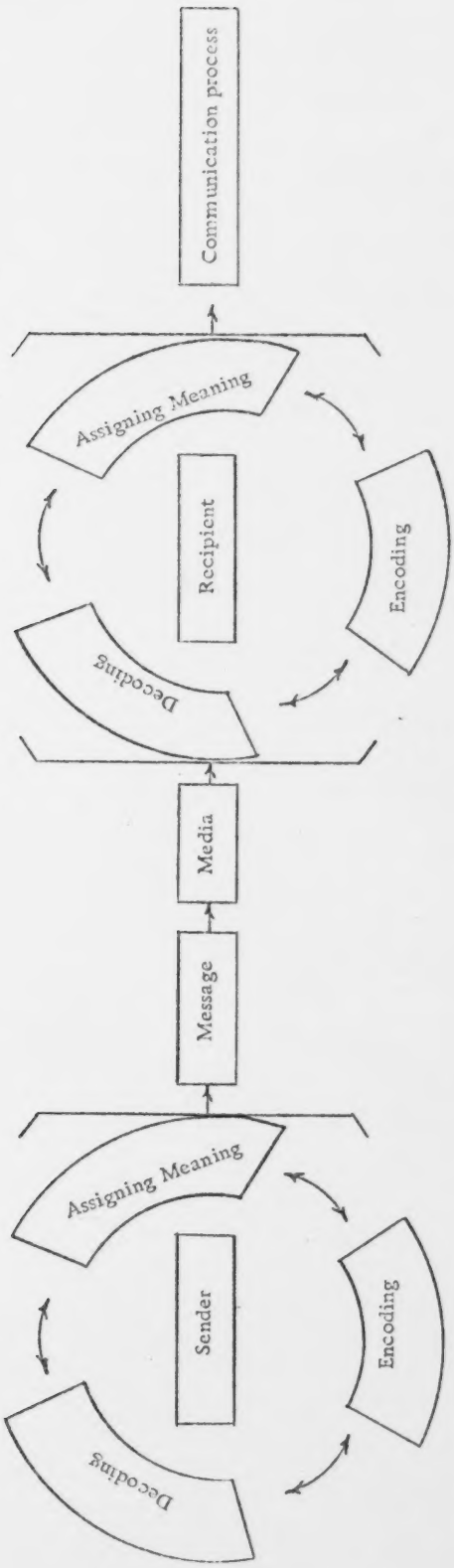

Fig. 3. A communication theory model. Adapted from Robinson.

> The model structure should help illustrate the concept of communication as a dynamic process consisting of many parts--one that should be viewed in its entirety when used as an aid in analyzing problems in public relations (p. 25).

The Robinson model included three processes: decoding, assigning meaning, and encoding. The three processes are equally important to the sender and to the recipient. Decoding embraces the things one does to understand the various communication directed to one. Meaning is assigned at practically the same instant one is decoding. The process of encoding is taking what one wishes to communicate to someone else and translating it into a "language" that he will understand. These three processes occur simultaneously and with intricate interaction.

Robinson said that the processes of decoding, assigning meaning, and encoding are summed up by the term feedback. Any communication effort will benefit from the use of feedback and will suffer from the lack of it. The public relations effort should include as much provision for the feedback of information as is humanly possible. "Clearly, feedback is an indispensable portion of the total communication process (p. 29)."

Amend (1968) developed a model of communication through common experience:

> When people attempt to communicate with each other, their communication ability is limited by their respective fields of common experience. If they have a high degree of the same kinds of experience, communication will be relatively easy. If their backgrounds and experiences are widely

different, it will be difficult, or maybe even painful or impossible for them to find enough common ground to establish a communication with each other (See Figure 4).

Fig. 4. Communication through common experience.

> If the circles represent the total lifetime experiences of individuals A and B, communication can occur relatively easily in the common area C. In the first example, with a high degree of overlap, there will be much easier communication than in the second example where there is very little common field of reference. If the circles do not overlap at all, communication between the individuals is impossible. In this case, if communication is to occur, the individuals would have to find or create an area of experience common to both, and build from there (p. 10).

Communication is a continuous two-way process. It begins before the formal program is undertaken, in the form of an input of information to the organization that may require its action through public relations media.

Wright and Evans (1964) suggested a basic formula of communication known as "SCAME." This is a word coined from the initial letters of the five essential steps in the process of effective communication: source, content, audience, media, and effect. The communication formula is illustrated in Figure 5.

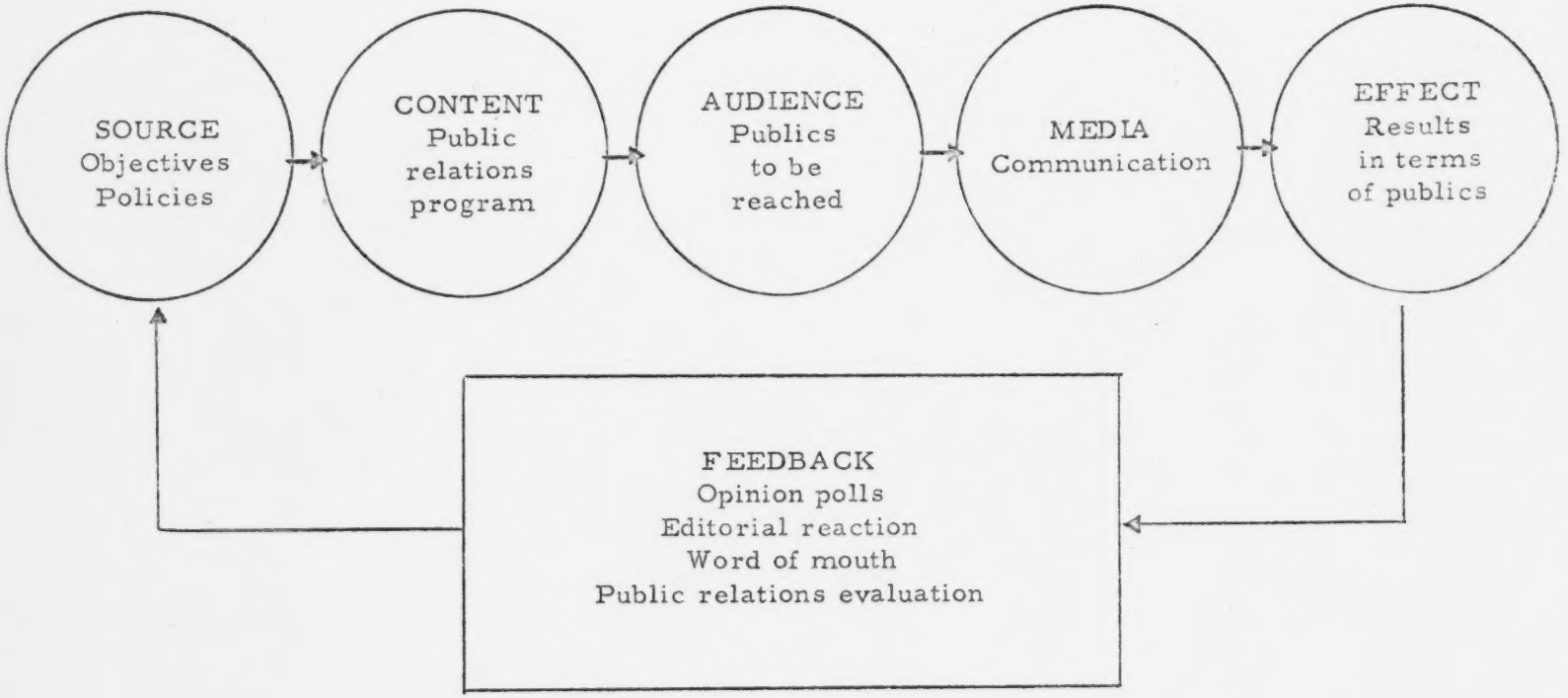

Fig. 5. The process of effective communication. Adapted from Wright and Evans.

A two-way system of communication is shown in Figure 5. If communication is to be more than just a means of conveying a message to the public, there must be some indication of the results in terms of public reaction. The element of continuity in public relations operations--the feedback of information--should enable an organization to keep itself informed through the public relations methods employed in the program. If this communication cycle is not complete, much of the value of future public relations effort may be lost.

> This formula should be extended to a continuous process of finding out what the results of a planned campaign have been. Moreover, it should continually stimulate management to develop futher plans and policies. The reaction, whether favorable, adverse, or unexpected, can be communicated back by such means as opinion polls, the individual reaction of editors as well as readers, customer approval as demonstrated by increased sales volume or inquiries, or word of mouth. Whatever methods are used, a conscious and sustained effort must be made to keep the return flow of information coming in through organized channels, so that management will know what has happened; and the best focal point for assembling and analyzing this information is the public relations organization itself (Wright and Evans, pp. 67-68).

Pletsch, McCormick, and Cunningham (1968) described a model that included many of the concepts identified in the previous models. The model shown in Figure 6 further clarifies the concepts:

S_____M_____C_____R

SOURCE sends a MESSAGE through a CHANNEL to a RECEIVER

Source may be a person, organization, government	Message may seek to -- report -- interpret -- persuade	Channel may be -- speaking -- writing -- visualizing (one or more of these)	Receiver may be -- one person -- small group -- mass audience

WHO says WHAT through what CHANNEL to WHOM?

FEEDBACK is the other half of S-M-C-R -- for what purpose?
-- with what effect?
-- in what situation?

Fig. 6. The communication process (p. 35).

A Framework of Communication

Fifteen principles of effective communication were suggested by Marston (1963). There is an abundance of communication in use at the present time and the general public will pay little attention to most communication unless the communications are of considerable personal interest. The message must recall and reinforce the experiences or goals of the recipients. Since such experiences are much wider than they used to be, and since the number of communications has multiplied even more, the role of the communications expert requires increasing knowledge and discrimination.

1. The principle of humanization. People need visual symbols to replace or amplify words if they are to remember and understand names. The advent of television has made the public more

symbol-minded. One identifies a nation with its president and a company with a personality; however, real people make mistakes which may reflect badly upon the organization which they personify.

> The ideal human symbol, perhaps, is a fictitious person who is always wise, serene, and pleasant, like General Mill's "Betty Crocker" or Quaker Oat's "Aunt Jemima." Everybody knows that these people do not exist, but they still fill a definite purpose in pleasant identification (p. 245).

The Forest Service's fire prevention symbol of "Smokey Bear" is an example of a symbol that always conveys a message.

2. The principle of suiting the message and means of communication to the audience. A mass media approach is usually noticed only by those who agree with the message; the rest ignore it. Too often, the communicator assumes the message has done its work because of the wide coverage of newspapers, magazines, or broadcasting. The specific audience must be identified; the message and the means of communication must be suited to the predispostion of the audience.

3. The principle of speaking the receiver's language. A communication directed toward the right public may fail because its words are outside the range of their understanding or because they convey meanings to the receiver quite different from those the writer had in mind. Good communication first consists in putting oneself into the other person's shoes and saying, "If I were a dairy farmer in Susquehanna County, what would my reaction be?" The communicator

must forget about the language of one's own trade in developing information for the benefit of others. One must be interested in the people one is addressing.

4. The principle of timeliness. One should be on the lookout for current and commonly experienced news which will be an approach to the public. Timeliness offers the opportunity to communicate and is the key to attention.

5. The principle of imagination in dramatizing communication. Much good communication is still nonverbal. Dramatizations that are honest, worthwhile, and in good taste often make a lasting impression and say things that words alone cannot convey.

6. The principle of two-way communication. Two-way communication is the essence of communication, it must be upward as well as downward, and it is a necessity to organizations that wish their staff and communities to hear them. The suggestion box, the small-group discussion, surveys of public opinion, tours with well-trained guides, committee participation in planning and executing events are ways of achieving two-way communication.

7. The principle of reaching your own people first. The staff of an organization is a significant public and is a front line of communication. The staff engages in effective word-of-mouth communication with other publics. One should make sure that the staff is well informed about the organization, participates in activities beyond

drawing a paycheck, and has the opportunity to cooperate in the public relations effort.

8. The principle of facing facts. Facing an unpleasant situation requires honesty and is the best procedure if communication is to be achieved. Straight talk builds a reputation for reliability, which gains attention and promotes belief in the communicator who is known to practice it.

9. The principle of communication by performing a needed public service. Activities and programs in the field of public service may have communication as the main element of approach. Corporations sponsoring specific 4-H Club award programs illustrate this principle, and the sponsorship is a public relations effort for the corporation.

10. The principle of stressing positive benefits. Successful public relations efforts must provide answers to the receiver's unspoken query of "What's in it for me?" The approach of stressing positive benefits may be more honest, more constructive, and less spurious than other emotional or intellectual appeals.

11. The principle of repetition. A good public relations effort is worth telling over and over in a variety of ways. A common failing in public relations efforts is to quit before the battle has been won.

12. The principle of overcoming refusal to pay attention. One of the most baffling problems occurs when an audience refuses to pay any attention to attempts at communication. Mental avoidance of messages because of their unpleasant nature often seems to occur in safety campaigns. The message is considered for the "other fellow" instead of oneself. In this case, a minor threat or an appeal to pride may be more effective than an accusation or an appeal to a serious fear.

13. The principle of concentrating upon leaders of opinion.

> Faced with insufficient funds to communicate with everybody, the public relations effort may be concentrated upon the leaders of opinion, who, it is thought, will then influence others . . . (p. 285).

Despite the difficulty of identifying the leaders of opinion, it is sound public relations strategy to cultivate the understanding and support of these leaders because they are worthwhile in themselves and because they also, to some extent, control the gateways of communication. These people do have the power to speak or to write. Teachers, editors, preachers, broadcasters, club and group leaders all come into contact with the public regularly in situations in which they convey ideas.

14. The principle of preconditioning an audience to a viewpoint. The most effective public relations communications takes place before issues are joined. The public relations practitioner needs the ability to foresee coming issues and directions of thought.

15. The principle of harmony of all communication. In order to be noted and remembered in today's busy communications world, an organization cannot afford to give a scattering picture of itself, either in appearance or thought. The organization must establish an identity that is easily recognized in all communication of the organization. For example, there is no question about the identity of "Coke" with the Coca-Cola Company.

Suggestions for Effective Communication

Cutlip and Center (1964) gave the following "7 C's of Communication":

1. Credibility. Start with a climate of belief. The receiver must have confidence in the sender and high regard for the source's competence.

2. Context. Provide for participation and playback; confirm, not contradict the message.

3. Content. The message must have meaning for the receiver, and it must be compatible with his value system.

4. Clarity. Put the message in simple terms, put the complex into slogans or themes which are simple and clear. The further a message has to travel, the simpler it must be.

5. Continuity and Consistency. Repetition--with variation--contributes to both factual and attitude learning.

6. Channels. Use established channels which the receiver uses and respects.

7. Capability of Audience. Know your audience. Communications are most effective when they require the least effort on the part of the recipient.

Dochterman suggested using the following communication suggestions to be sure that the public relations effort comes through:

1. News releases should emphasize quality, not quantity.

2. Prepare a short summary of the talk that one will give to an organization. The summary will help insure that the story will reach the press. The information in the talk should be important to the other people in the community.

3. Prepare a biographical sketch of oneself when speaking to an organization. The sketch can be used for introductions and for newspaper publicity.

4. Be creative, find new ways to illustrate the story.

5. Recognize the competition of television, advertising, entertainment, etc. Don't try to compete, but, discover the things one can do better than anyone else and do it.

6. Hold press conferences when appropriate.

> Extension is providing the kind of service that is unique from the service offered by other agencies and organizations.

> If an organization has limitations, the limitations are self made.[5]

Behavioral Science and Communication

Lane (1965) reported a trend on the part of public relations practitioners to discard outdated concepts of persuasion in favor of disciplined, professional efforts to pool the resources of specialists in such diverse fields as social psychology, cultural anthropology, linguistics, and computer programming. This trend is late in developing.

> Much of the theory behind opinion change and propaganda techniques is not new. The application of basic theory . . . was outlined over a quarter-century ago. Yet neither theory not succeeding refinements have been put into practice by . . . public relations practitioners (p. 9).

The following suggestions were made by Lane as steps that could be helpful to the public relations practitioner in applying the relevance of social science for public relations programming:

1. Secure a good set of sourcebooks in small group research and social psychology, and subscribe to some of the professional journals in related disciplines.

2. Develop files of key studies uncovered from these and other sources.

3. Make use of this information in planning and programming.

4. Make use of innovations in the analysis of:

   a. problems,

---

[5]Clifford L. Dochterman, Director of Public Relations, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado. Personal interview, February 19, 1971.

b. macro-publics (any group with an identifiable common bond),

c. micro-publics (a smaller group with identifiable needs, motivations, and relationships),

d. media effectiveness, and

e. language.

5. Think of the mass persuasion process as three steps in planning and programming:

Step one: The communicator influences the macro-public leaders such as columnists, broadcasters, high-credibility sources.

Step two: From macro-public leaders to micro-public leaders. These are the leaders of functional groups, with great power to build behavioral support for opinion change.

Step three: From micro-public leaders to group members. This is the payoff, in general adoption of new opinion.

6. Build interpersonal contact into the program.

7. Learn and use group dynamics techniques.

8. Spend more time on planning, on research and analysis into the needs and motivations of key publics, as a means of developing consonant verbal and personal appeals.

The mass communications methods used by public relations people is designed to motivate a particular audience according to Lane (1967). The audience is differentiated by its opinions, attitudes, and

beliefs and the development of optimum communications strategy--including selection of means, media, messages, and communications sources--is wholly dependent on the audience. Opinons are short term judgments, subject to rapid change, and are only incidentally related to behavior. Attitudes represent combinations of opinions about objects, issues, persons, groups, or institutions. Belief refers to one's central values about life. The following techniques--called reduction of discrepancy--are useful in making the communication position appear somewhat in line with the audience's attitude:

1. Using media most closely identified with the audience's position.

2. Using a communications source that enjoys high credibility for the audience on this issue.

3. Playing down the differences between the communication and the audience's attitudes.

4. Seeking identification in vocabulary and anecdote with the audience in an area removed from the issue.

5. Establishing your position as being the majority opinion--defining the majority from the audience itself.

6. Bringing the audience's group identifications into play--when those identifications will help the development of a positive response. The converse is also true.

7. Since you can't modify your objectives, modify your message to fit your needs (p. 6).

Mass communications generally works best in creating opinions and is somewhat effective in changing opinions and attitudes. Small group

dynamics is useful to some extent in changing attitudes. Beliefs cannot be changed by mass communications.

Bailey (1968) reported the statements of a number of leaders in public relations concerning the use of behavioral science principles and research findings in public relations. The following points will summarize their statements:

1. The theories of behavior advanced by psychologists are needed where there are emotional factors, general attitudes, or basic attitudinal syndromes involved in controversial issues.

2. Communicators should work through the social structure in addition to the mass media to reach people. Social structure is a communication network and the more one knows about social structure the more one knows about effective communications.

3. The effective public relations practitioner must know specifically what motivates his publics, what they are thinking, and how they are reacting to his program.

4. Behavioral science is best utilized by public relations in planning, programming, mapping strategy, and validating audiences.

> When you get right down to it, the business of the public relations practitioner is behavior--human behavior. The tasks with which he busies himself are not ends in themselves, but means to the end of influencing behavior (p. 14).

Summary

Communication is an essential step in the public relations process to earn public understanding and acceptance. Communication is defined as the sharing of ideas and feelings in a mood of mutuality. The person doing public relations is a communicator.

The communication process was illustrated in the study with several models. The model shown in Figure 7 was an attempt to include the necessary elements of the communication process in a model that will be useful to the Extension Service in the public relations effort.

There are four stages in the Extension communication process model: Extension Service, program, media, and publics. The four stages are described as follows:

1. Extension Service. The source of the communication is the Extension organization with its objectives and policies.

2. Program. The program is the means of conveying to the public a better understanding of the philosophy, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of Extension. The program or message may seek to report, interpret, and/or persuade.

3. Media. The media represents any and all of the methods of communicating the Extension public relations effort to the various relevant publics.

4. Publics. The public is any group of people who share a common interest. There are many publics, all are different and each should be handled differently.

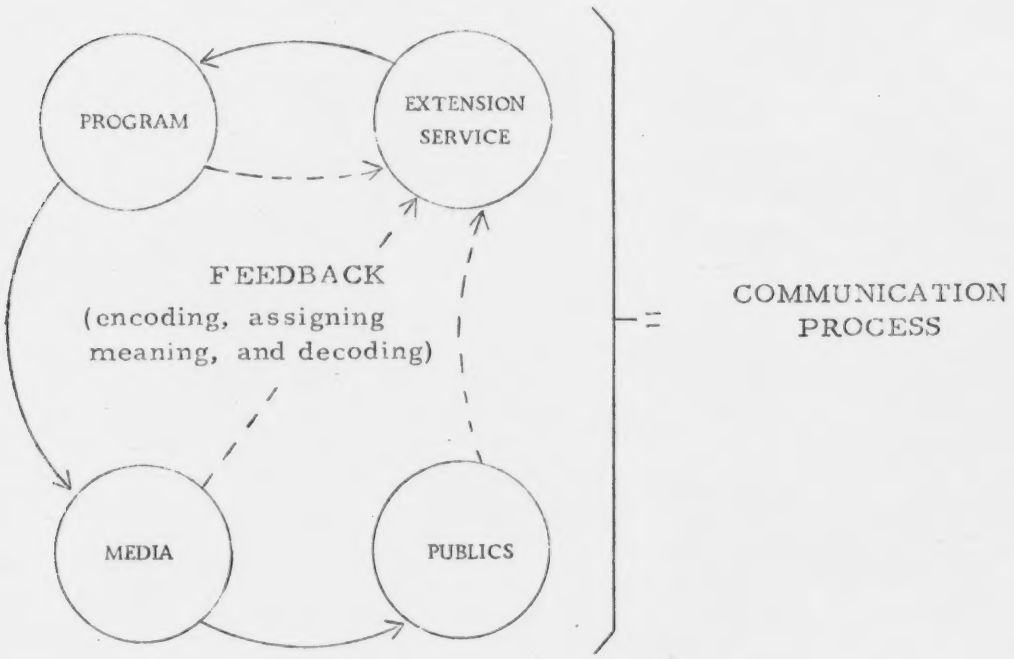

Fig. 7. The Extension communication process model.

The feedback of information is a very important element in the Extension communication process model. Feedback enables an organization to continuously evaluate and revise its public relations methods and programs.

The study identified the following principles of effective communication:

1. Know the public. The communicator needs to know what motivates the public, understand the opinions, attitudes, and beliefs of the public; identify in terms of people, and recognize that communication is facilitated or limited by the field of common experience of the recipient.

2. Be creative. To this, one must add: be unique, timely, dramatic, use simple terms, and keep the message relevant.

3. Use established communication methods. The most effective communication channels are the ones used and respected by the recipient. The message must be varied, repeated, and suited to the audience. Face the unpleasant situation with honesty; keep the public confidence.

4. Use two-way communication. The process of making it possible for the receiver to translate the message, assign meaning, and tell the communicator and/or the public what he understood and accepted from the message. The feedback of information is an indispensible part of the communication process.

Leavitt (1969) had the following to say about communication:

> . . . communication is largely the communicator's responsibility. For the communicator's job is to communicate--and if to communicate he must get his message into the receiver--then his responsibility cannot end until the receiver has received. And he cannot be sure that the receiver has received until he gets confirming feedback from the receiver (p. 301).

Many authors in the professional journals and textbooks on public relations have stated that the public relations practitioner needs to apply the knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences, because the business of the public relations practitioner is behavior--human behavior. The study pointed out a number of suggestions, techniques, and principles concerning the use of the social and behavioral sciences in public relations.

Robinson (1966) emphasized the importance of these views:

> The future (of the public relations practitioner) is going to belong to the practitioner with specialized training that includes a considerable amount of specific knowledge of the social and behavioral sciences and their respective research methods. The reason: The public relations practitioner is increasingly having to behave like an applied social and behavioral scientist (p. 46).

A study on communication and public relations would be amiss if no consideration were given to the application of communications media as the means of conveying the public relations program to the recipient. However, a discussion of the use of the media is beyond the scope of the study. A discussion of the application of communications media is a study in its own right. It seemed adequate to report that printed, oral, audio, visual, electronic, and other forms of mass media all have their place in the communication process of public relations. Communicators should also work through the social structure to reach people.

According to Leavitt (1969) the important thing to remember is:

> People begin, modify, and end relationships by communicating with one another. Communication is their channel of influence, their mechanism of change (p. 297). . . . Communication is a primary tool for effecting behavior change (p. 303).

CHAPTER V

IMPROVING EXTENSION PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Cooperative Extension Service is an important public relations arm of the Land-Grant institution which it represents. The public image of Extension work is a concern of the Land-Grant institutions. Recent and continuing expansion of Extension's programs and responsibilities places an increasing emphasis on the need for good Extension public relations.

Extension public relations, whether recognized or not, has existed from the beginning of Extension work. One might say that good public relations has been the chief stock in trade of the Cooperative Extension Service. Good public relations must be accomplished in a spirit of seriousness and sincerity; never in an artificial or trumped up manner. The destination of Extension's public relations should always be the concern for Extension's publics: happier, more prosperous, and better informed people--higher grade public service.

Today's world is made up of many complexities and conflicts where community, national, and world problems are becoming more intense. There is sharp competition for public funds to finance social-service programs, and there are many interests clamoring to gain position. In the given situation, public relations is even more

necessary than it has been in the past. The real question is, whether public relations is to be helpful or harmful. It is far better to do public relations work in an organized way than to ignore or lightly touch upon them and hope for the best.

The following paragraphs will report some of the findings of surveys, studies, and committee reports of Extension and Extension related organizations that have been made during the last 20 years. These findings will suggest some of the areas that are of concern in improving Extension public relations and some of the ways in which a better understanding of communications can make the Extension public relations effort more effective.

The Report of the Subcommittee on Public Relations (1952) listed the following major public relations objectives that were common to Extension on a nation-wide basis:

1. To establish widespread use of program-planning procedures and techniques that involve local people and insure the active participation of county interest groups.

2. To better inform top-level officials of State colleges or universities, members of county governing bodies, and members of State legislatures and the Federal Congress, regarding Extension policies, programs, and accomplishments.

3. To better inform farm, rural nonfarm, and urban people about the Extension Service--what it is, how it operates, and what it does.

4. To improve county office facilities and services.

5. To overcome unsatisfactory employment conditions, which in many States are a serious handicap in recruiting and maintaining a competent Extension staff.

6. To establish dynamic supervision with emphasis focused on program leadership and on higher standards of teaching quantitatively and qualitatively.

7. To clarify and strengthen relations with Federal agricultural agencies operating in counties.

8. To recognize the need for a short, popular name that clearly identifies the Cooperative Extension Service and its major programs throughout the Nation (pp. 14-15).

Sanders (1960) discovered nine needs of the Extension public relations program that point up several areas that need continuing attention:

1. There is still prevalent in the minds of some Extension personnel the idea that good public relations is a sort of "glad handing," money-spending, entertaining, publicity activity which is apart from their regular procedures.

2. The Agricultural Extension Service needs to be better understood, more fully appreciated, and more liberally supported in many colleges and universities.

3. Elected and appointed officials--local, state and national--need a fuller understanding of the organization, its program and accomplishments.

4. Our program development procedures need broadening and perfecting.

5. We need better programs developed for more specific groups.

6. The great non-farm urban public needs an appreciation of agriculture and its contribution to our economy and our civilization.

> 7. We need to develop a role of leadership with and cement together the whole group of commercial enterprises which we call "agribusiness."
>
> 8. We need better working relationships with commercial mass media personnel.
>
> 9. We need improvement of communication within our organizations. We need to strengthen internal relations by working together in support of our Extension program (pp. 5-6).

West (1962) studied the time efficiency of Extension agents and said that the Extension worker must carefully and continuously evaluate the use of one's time. This evaluation will make better public relations possible by showing accomplishments of previous programs, defining present and future needs for Extension work, serving as a guide for establishing priorities, and helping to identify Extension audiences.

Clark and Abdullah (1964) concluded from three studies of the position of the chairman of the county Extension staff that among other things the county chairman should be: teacher, leader, organizer, policy advisor and interpreter, coordinator, personnel manager, reporter, housekeeper, supervisor, business manager, budget controller, communicator, program planner, and public relations man. A study of the training needs for county Extension chairmen found that need was centered in four major areas: public relations, program development, business management, and finance.

The National Association of County Agricultural Agents is a professional organization for county agents (Extension staff members assigned to an agricultural agent position in a county). One of the important committees of the National Association is the Public Relations Committee. The 1970 Chairman of the Public Relations Committee reported the following activities as examples of some of the outstanding accomplishments of state committees (Hibbard, 1970):

1. Eighteen states held Public Relations "Workshops."

2. The Pennsylvania committee arranged Tele-Lecture demonstrations to improve mass media, suggested a slide set or a movie to tell the story of Extension to the general public, discussed the Extension Service image as it applies to mass media, and took steps to have the University information section include data sheets in TV-Radio News that would include the proper ingredients for introducing programs.

3. The Maryland committee planned an "Extension-Public Relations Week." Counties were asked to participate in publicizing what Extension does; making use of news articles, exhibits, and displays.

4. The North Carolina chairman reported a "County Commissioners Day" to be held at the North Carolina State University under the direction of the Chancellor, Dean of Agriculture, and the

Director of Extension. This committee also planned special emphasis programs for: Farm-City Week, agribusiness tours, appropriate recognition of agricultural leadership, and key leaders to visit North Carolina State University to learn of the work being done in research, teaching, and Extension.

5. The Iowa committee recommended that a salaried professional public relations representative be hired for Extension at the state level.

6. The Alabama committee started the "Country Kitchen Project" in 1969, which is a hospitality room serving Alabama produced food to those attending the State Convention of the Association of County Commissioners.

7. The New England committee set up a project in the area of "land use" problems in an effort to get across to the general public that the Extension staff does have an expertise in this area and is playing a major role in correcting and preventing environmental pollution. The New England power companies cooperated by carrying flyers in their monthly bills giving information and suggestions on "land use" problems. Over a million families received these flyers, and in each case Extension is given credit for the information (pp. 7, 11, 20).

Hall (1970), Chairman of the 1971 Public Relations Committee of the National Association of County Agricultural Agents, proposed

these goals: to provide members with ideas and techniques that can be used in establishing and maintaining favorable relationships with the general public, individuals, organizations, and legislative units on the local state, and national level; and to encourage members to share ideas and techniques that have been successful with others.

Hall outlined the following activities to accomplish the goals of the Public Relations Committee:

1. Encourage and assist State chairmen in setting up Public Relations Workshops either on a state or area basis.

2. Provide State chairmen with material for continuation of our packet program for new extension agents in an effort to increase membership.

3. Make available to our membership our decal by sale through the State chairmen.

4. Encourage written reports from all county extension offices to their county commissioners, state legislators and members of Congress.

5. Ask each State chairman to report good public relations activities in their state every three months.

6. Encourage membership to write appropriate thank yous to supporters of Extension programs on a local, state and national level--including annual meeting.

7. Ask the Board of Directors and the Annual Meeting Committee of NACAA to secure and provide appropriate bumper stickers for agents attending the annual meeting.

8. Collect and make available to State chairmen, Public Relations ideas and techniques that have worked for others (pp. 3, 7).

The Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service expressed a sincere interest in improving the public relations effort of its Extension staff by devoting the entire program of the 1970 Annual Extension Service Conference to the theme--Selling Extension: My Job. The program was designed to fulfill these goals:

1. Help staff members establish a basis for effective communications with clientele and general public.

2. Improve relations within the University and the Extension family.

3. Assist staff in developing techniques which effectively mirror Extension's image.

4. Offer opportunities for fellowship and rapport.

The various sessions were built around these divisions of the theme: Our corporate structure; Who are we selling to; Packaging our product; How others sell their "products"; What we're selling; and Gaining support for our product. Wamhoff reported:

> Public relations is an ongoing present activity among all members of the Extension staff. Our efforts at the last conference in 1970 were directed to helping all staff whether on campus or in the field to become more public conscious.
>
> Presenting an accurate image of our various specifics and maintaining extra organizational and institutional liason is a formidable task but one that is often given second billing in terms of importance. A major part

of my responsibility as Assistant to the Director is in organizing Extension efforts in this regard.[6]

The following examples of public relations efforts in business make a worthwhile addition to the study.

The American Dairy Association's public relations program during the past decade has been built around sponsoring the production and distribution of motion pictures with well defined messages for specific target audiences. Annual audiences for four ADA movies have averaged about 50,000,000 people. The ADA movie must produce results in terms of influencing audiences to do the things the organization is in the business to do--influence the public to drink more milk, eat more ice cream and cheese. This type of public relations program is going to continue for a long time (Neu, 1965).

Public service time on radio and TV has increased significantly over the past decade as the public relations groups discovered that radio and TV stations welcome well prepared, non-commercial materials (Stamler, 1969). This offers the public relations effort a real opportunity to supplement the printed word to communicate to the public. Records, tapes, film, and slides can be an integral part of an overall public relations program. Broadcasting has assumed a nearly

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[6]Carroll H. Wamhoff, Assistant to the Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan. Personal letter, March 4, 1971, and program of the 1970 Annual Conference of the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service.

equal status with the press; it is now more than just a supplemental medium.

> The 70's will demand more and more information and present added opportunities for the use of public service time. Keeping messages educational and informative and well-produced is the way to succeed (p. 82).

Snow (1970) reported that the Dairylea Cooperative, Inc. used a crisis as a public relations tool. The U. S. postal strike in March, 1970, was going to delay the delivery of 11,000 dairy farmers' monthly milk checks. "Operation Pony Express" was promptly organized and the fieldmen, service men, and tank truck drivers of this farmers' cooperative took over the job of delivering the farmers' "pay checks"--some as large as $11,000--within three days of normal mail delivery. Urban newspapers, radio, and TV stations carried the story throughout the seven-state area. Regional offices received immediate feedback as members called in to say that they had received the news and their check. This emergency could have been a troublesome situation.

> . . . the public relations success wasn't a matter of luck by any means. Without the kind of teamwork we enjoyed, both within the organization and with our agency, and without the willingness of all these people to make the strenuous effort to get the job done, the milk checks would eventually have made it but the story would have gone untold (p. 12).

Four case studies were presented by Robinson (1966) as an aid toward understanding public relations. In each case he identified some of the problems faced by the public relations practitioner.

Case Study 1. This is a military situation where the modification of activities at Bolling Air Force Base resulted in public confusion. The base was only closing down the flying operations, and the public thought the base was to be closed completely. The fact was that steps were going to be taken to make increased use of Bolling Air Force Base.

Case Study 2. The Esso Research and Engineering Company was concerned about its research reputation among the scientific community because of the unavoidable lag in the publication of basic and chemical research being done by the company.

Case Study 3. Lesley College, a small women's college, had shown considerable growth during recent years and had hired a person to handle college public relations. The college had no planned publicity, no planned community relations program, no alumnae association, and had never done any development or fund-raising work.

Case Study 4. The National Safety Council program to promote the use of automobile seat belts is a classic case in overcoming resistance to change. In this large task with the entire motoring audience as the public--it is clear that there are a multitude of conflicting forces, some helpful, some detrimental, to furthering the cause of seat belt usage.

Robinson made six generalizations from these cases: (1) the need for communication, (2) the need for shaping attitudes or

behavior, (3) the need for planning, (4) the need for relating public relations programs to management, (5) the need for a searching examination of the ethics of what is planned, and (6) the need for feedback of information. From these generalizations the following six principles were developed:

1. Because of his constant need to be an effective communicator, the public relations practitioner of the future must understand the process of communication from a theoretical as well as a practical point of view.

2. Because of his preoccupation with changing attitudes and behavior, the public relations practitioner must understand human behavior as an applied social and behavioral scientist. That is, he must have enough knowledge of such disciplines as psychology and sociology to have a solid, working understanding of the factors that affect human behavior.

3. Because of the administrative and planning skills called for in implementing a public relations program, the public relations practitioner must have some management training, particularly in organizational structure and the elements of coordination and supervision of other people.

4. Because every action taken by a public relations practitioner on behalf of his organization reflects management's policies and decisions, the public relations practitioner must be a member of top management, regardless of the type of organization.

5. Because every action taken by a public relations practitioner on behalf of the organization with which he is associated has ethical implications, the public relations practitioner must have a strong, active ethical and moral code to guide him in his everyday work.

6. Because of his need for feedback of information to guide him in subsequent public relations action and to make him capable of demonstrating the effectiveness of his actions, the public relations practitioner of the

> future will need a thorough grounding in social science research methods (pp. 36-37).

It should be reported that there is an organization of agricultural public relations practitioners. The organization called the Agricultural Relations Council is a professional council composed of over 150 executives working in the field of agricultural public relations. The council is a national, non-profit, incorporated association, and was organized in 1953. The object of this professional council is to promote the public welfare through the advancement of the art and science of agricultural public relations. The council provides the opportunity for the exchange of ideas and for closer working relationships among those involved in public relations programs in the agricultural field. The membership includes a number of Extension specialists from the information and communication departments of the state Extension Services. Records of the council are maintained in its office at: Agricultural Relations Council, Room 600, 18 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60603 (1970 Directory of Communicators in Agriculture, 1970).

Summary

Improving Extension's public relations is the ultimate purpose of the study. Extension public relations will be made more effective by using these suggestions:

1. Convey to the Extension staff an understanding of Extension public relations, what it is, and what it can do for Extension.

2. Improve Extension programs and program development.

3. Improve communication methods and build better working relationships with commercial mass media personnel.

4. Improve the Extension Service by establishing an identity, maintaining a competent staff, and updating office facilities and services.

5. Provide in-service training in public relations for Extension staff members. Public relations must become the attitude of every Extension staff member.

6. Keep elected and appointed officials of local, state, and national government informed regarding Extension policies, programs, and accomplishments.

7. Keep the colleges and universities, government agencies, and civic and service groups informed regarding Extension policies, programs, and accomplishments.

8. Keep farm, non-farm, and urban people informed about the Extension Service--what it is, how it operates, and what it does.

9. Give the great non-farm public an appreciation of agriculture and its contribution to our economy and our civilization.

The generalizations concerning public relations show the wide range of activities required by the public relations effort. The

generalizations were stated as "needs" of the public relations effort, and they are related to: communication theory, research, psychology and sociology. Extension staff members who are responsible for implementing public relations programs must understand the theoretical and practical process of communication; must understand the factors that affect human behavior; must have some management training; must understand the need for feedback of information and have a knowledge of the social science research methods.

Robinson (1969) defined research as means of obtaining reliable knowledge and said that survey research was almost the only type of research used, from the social and behavioral sciences, by public relations practitioners.

As Taylor (1970) said:

> People are going to expect to see some fundamental changes in what we do. They are going to insist--are insisting--on some program changes. They are going to insist on us doing things differently from the way we have long done them. If we don't change, they will change things for us as has already happened to a considerable extent. . . .
>
> News releases, films, television programming, field days--none of the information techniques will contribute very positively to our image without basic changes to our actions. We must go directly to our programs first, rather than to our techniques (p. 5).

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Good public relations is essential to the Cooperative Extension Service for many reasons. One of the prime reasons is the dependence of the Extension Service upon appropriations of tax funds by democratically elected officials. The Extension Service is engaged in a voluntary informal type of educational effort. For this reason, it is important that Extension develop and maintain in the minds of the many publics it serves, a high level of recognition and appreciation for its program, activities, and accomplishments. The voluntary and local leaders, the people Extension serves, and the Extension staffs need to fully understand how Extension work is conducted.

The study attempted to show that effective Extension public relations involves all Extension staff members, are based on sound programs communicated to Extension publics; to achieve a better understanding of the philosophy, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of Extension.

Sanders (1960) stated that good public relations must grow out of two fundamental forces:

1. a competent staff and

2. programs democratically developed, involving the people, so that they will be led to know, understand and

> have the desire to solve their real problems. Good educational programs will help in accomplishing that purpose (p. 2).

The purpose of the study was to define public relations, identify the steps in the public relations process, and determine the principles of effective communications as a means to more effective public relations for Extension.

The study reported that public relations is an applied and behavioral science. This view is reflected in the definition of Extension public relations and was stated in this manner:

Extension public relations is a planned and systematic two-way process of communication between Extension and its publics. The function of the public relations process is:

1. to evaluate the attitudes of the various relevant publics (public is used to refer to any group of people who share a common interest);

2. to define objectives for increasing public understanding and acceptance of Extension programs, policies, and personnel;

3. to identify the objectives with the public interest; and

4. to develop, execute, and evaluate a program to earn public understanding and acceptance.

The Extension public relations process was designed as a methodical approach to developing the public relations effort. This

approach will also be useful in developing other Extension programs. The Extension public relations process identified these five steps:

1. Analysis
2. Planning
3. Communication
4. Evaluation
5. Revision

The process of identifying problems and developing programs is continuous and was described as the circular motion of a moving wheel. The public relations effort is dynamic and changing; it is a never ending process.

The Extension communication process model developed in the study emphasized these points: the EXTENSION SERVICE develops a PROGRAM communicated through the MEDIA to the PUBLICS. The model includes the FEEDBACK of information from the program, media, and publics to the Extension Service to continuously evaluate and revise its public relations methods and programs. Four principles of effective communication were listed and described.

1. Know the public.
2. Be creative.
3. Use established communication methods.
4. Use two-way communication.

The study cited references to show that there is a trend in the field of public relations to use the resources of the social and behavioral sciences. The business of the public relations practitioner is human behavior.

The study identified nine suggestions for making Extension public relations more effective. The suggestions will be stated as recommendations to the Cooperative Extension Service to improve Extension's public relations.

Five of the recommendations are related to the Extension organization, and therefore, they deal with the internal public relations of the Extension Service.

1. Convey to the Extension staff an understanding of Extension public relations, what it is, and what it can do for Extension. Extension staff members should work with the professional organizations of Extension and the professional organizations in the public relations field. The staff members need to know that public relations is a two-way communication process, based on the evaluation of public attitude, with defined objectives that identify with the public interest; the final product being the Extension program that is developed, executed, and evaluated to earn public understanding and acceptance.

2. Improve Extension programs and program development by using the Extension public relations process: (1) analysis, (2) planning, (3) communication, (4) evaluation, and (5) revision.

3. Improve communication methods and build better working relationships with commercial mass media personnel by using the communication process: the EXTENSION SERVICE develops a

PROGRAM communicated through the MEDIA to the PUBLICS; and by using the principles of effective communication: (1) know the public, (2) be creative, (3) use established communication methods, and (4) use two-way communication.

4. Improve the Extension Service by: (1) establishing an identity that is easily recognized in all communication of the Extension Service, (2) maintaining a competent staff by evaluating positions and eliminating unsatisfactory employment conditions, and (3) updating office facilities and service.

There are a variety of ways that Extension offices, telephone listings, staff titles, news, radio, and TV programs are identified. The expansion of general or university Extension is a complicating factor in identity. The term "Extension" is no longer an identifying term that is peculiar to the Cooperative Extension Service. The Report of the Subcommittee on Public Relations (1952) and Sanders (1960) indicated that there has been improvement in employment conditions and office facilities. However, Sanders reported that these areas were generally ranked "satisfactory" or "adequate" which still shows a need for improvement. The quality of an organization's personnel has a close relationhsip to the attitude of the public toward the organization.

5. Provide in-service training in public relations for Extension staff members. Public relations must become the attitude of

every Extension staff member. Authority for Extension public relations should be assigned to a staff member at the state level, to a staff member in each department or discipline, and to a staff member in each county office. Responsibility for Extension public relations is a part of the work of every Extension staff member.

The other four recommendations are related to the Extension programs with the various relevant publics, and therefore, they deal with the external public relations of the Extension Service.

6. Keep elected and appointed officials of local, state, and national government informed regarding Extension policies, programs, and accomplishments.

The persons in these positions are constantly changing, due to elections and new appointments. In general, these persons are not well informed regarding Cooperative Extension work, and it is a challenge to keep them informed. These persons need to be sufficiently informed about Extension as a public educational and service agency to enable them to provide the resources required to maintain the kind of Extension Service that their constituents request.

7. Keep the colleges and universities, government agencies, and civic and service groups informed regarding Extension policies, programs, and accomplishments.

There is a great need for these groups to understand the philosophy, objectives, accomplishments, and needs of each other.

When there is competition and lack of understanding between public agencies or groups working with the same publics, this will detract from the public's confidence in those agencies and will diminish the quality and quantity of the service by each agency or group.

8. Keep farm, non-farm, and urban people informed about the Extension Service--what it is, how it operates, and what it does.

There has been a rapid shift in the relative size of each of these publics during recent years. With urban people constituting a predominantly large proportion of the total population, and their interest in the home demonstration and youth programs of the Cooperative Extension Service increasing, it is important that each of these publics have a knowledge of the Cooperative Extension Service.

9. Give the great non-farm public an appreciation of agriculture and its contribution to our economy and our civilization.

Today only about 5 percent of the U. S. population are farmers. The ability to produce food has passed rapidly from the hands of many to those of a few, and it has occurred so quickly that most of the nation is unaware of how or why it happened. This situation offers the opportunity to tell the success story of agriculture to all of the publics with programs like those conducted during Farm-City Week.

The case studies presented in the study were used to develop six generalizations concerning public relations programs: (1) the need

for communication, (2) the need for shaping attitudes or behavior, (3) the need for planning, (4) the need for relating public relations programs to management, (5) the need for a searching examination of the ethics of what is planned, and (6) the need for feedback of information.

These generalizations concerning public relations are all behaviorally oriented, and they point to the fact that Extension staff members must understand the process of communication, must understand human behavior, must have some management training, must understand the Extension organization, must develop programs that are ethically correct, and must have a knowledge of the social science research methods.

The examples of public relations programs by Extension and business reported in Chapter V were no doubt successful because the person or group that was responsible for the public relations effort, either consciously or unconsiously, made use of the five steps in the public relations process and the principles of effective communication that were developed in the study.

One can easily realize that the New England Extension staff members analyzed the situation regarding the lack of understanding of the general public concerning the expertise of Extension in land use planning and environmental improvement. The program involved planning with the power companies and made use of their mailing of

monthly bills to communicate the Extension expertise to over a million families. One can also expect that there was a feedback of information to be used in evaluating and revising future programs. This program also applied the principles of effective communication in that the staff identified and knew something about the public with which they were dealing, they were creative in their approach to disseminating information, they used an established communication method, i.e., the monthly bill; and one can assume that they planned for two-way communication or in some manner received a feedback of information.

The Dairylea illustration of using a crisis to build good public relations can be compared to examples of an Extension agent and a program planning committee developing an effective program to combat a serious threat of armyworm to the corn crop of an area, or the educational program that resulted from a regional milk strike. These types of programs would lend themselves to the public relations process and the principles of effective communication and will result in effective public relations for the Extension Service.

Each of the examples of public relations programs in Chapter V could be related to one of the nine recommendations to improve Extension public relations. The two programs for the county commissioners are effective means of keeping local government officials informed about the policies, programs, and accomplishments of Extension.

The Michigan Cooperative Extension Service Annual Conference--Selling Extension: My Job--provided an opportunity to convey to the Extension staff an understanding of Extension public relations. The conference program would indicate that the Extension staff members were probably made aware of all nine of the recommendations of this study.

Taylor (1970) was pointing to the kinds of recommendations made to the Extension Service in the study when he said:

> People who pay the bills only want results. If we can do our job with drive, energy, and aggressiveness--in terms of goals that perform a needed public service--and keep the people informed of our efforts--we should come out alright in the public eye.
>
> A knowledgeable and informed people, supporting the activities of their government and their institutions, still remains the hard-rock foundation of a democracy. Therein, perhaps, lies our primary goal--a goal we've always had and merely need to reaffirm today (p. 17).

"Helping people help themselves" appropriately expresses Extension's approach to public service. Extension's specific objectives rotate around this theme. It is to this center of gravity that the Cooperative Extension Service attaches its public relations effort (The Report of the Subcommittee on Public Relations, 1952).

Extension public relations is what the public thinks about the Cooperative Extension Service. An effective public relations program is one that conveys a favorable impression and understanding of Extension's philosophy, objectives, accomplishments, and needs. In the

simplest terms, public relations is merely conveying to others, in many different ways, an understanding of what one is doing. When the impression is favorable, the public relations program is good; when the impression is unfavorable the public relations program is bad. If the work of an organization is good, it is time to let the public know, in fact, they deserve to know. The Extension Service must let others know that its work is important to Extension, to the community, and to the world. The job of improving the Extension image is Extension's most important job, because Extension public relations exist whether the Extension Service does anything about it or not.

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